

Media Release

GETTING THE RIGHT CARE IN THE RIGHT PLACE

The way people access A&E services is changing to keep patients and NHS Scotland safe this winter – making sure everyone gets the right care in the right place.

A&E departments remain open for those who have a life-threatening emergency. However, to ensure patients have the fastest access to the treatment they need, anyone with a non-life threatening condition are now to be directed to the right NHS service for them. In hours access to General Practice is unchanged and remains the first port of call for the majority of urgent care issues.

If A&E is the most appropriate place to provide the right care, patients will either be directly referred to A&E by NHS 24 or to a telephone or video consultation with a senior clinical decision maker.

The remote consultation approach is designed to avoid unnecessary waits in crowded waiting areas and offer care much closer to home whenever possible. If senior clinical decision makers determine the patient needs to go to A&E, they may be offered an appointment to attend, and the team will know to expect them so they can be seen directly at that time.

NHS 24 on 111 is also there for those who need urgent medical attention but can't wait for their GP practice or dentist to re-open.

Those with life-threatening conditions including suspected heart attacks or strokes, severe breathing difficulties, severe bleeding, or severe injury should continue to go straight to A&E or call 999. "

This new way of delivering urgent care has been designed to help people get the right care in the right place this winter, at time when there is increased pressure on NHS services.

The public are now being asked to:

- use the [NHS inform](#) website to access advice on common symptoms, guidance for self-help and where to go if further medical care is needed
- contact their local GP practice during the day for an appointment or over-the-phone advice
- call 111 day or night when they think they need A&E but it is not life-threatening
- call 111 and select the Mental Health Hub to access mental health advice and guidance or call the Breathing Space telephone helpline on 0800 83 85 87
- call 111 or use NHS inform out of hours when they are too ill to wait for their GP practice to open, or for worsening symptoms of COVID-19
- use [nhsinform.scot](#) to access the location of their local minor injuries unit for non- life threatening but painful injuries such as a deep cut, a broken or sprained ankle or a painful burn injury

Health Secretary Jeane Freeman said:

"The NHS is always there for you. However, for many of us, A&E is not the right place for the care we need. That is why we are making it easier to get the right care in the right place. If you think you need to go to A&E for care that is not life-threatening, the NHS 24 telephone service on 111 will be available day and night to direct you to the care you need.

"Your GP Practice is also always there for you and can be contacted for urgent but non-life threatening conditions. However, in an emergency, you should continue to call 999 or go to your nearest A&E department.

“By doing so, we will continue to help our doctors and nurses through this pandemic, and ensure A&E provides the fastest and most appropriate care for people when they really need it. Help us keep you and our NHS safe by making the right call at the right time to access the right care in the right place for you and your family.”

NHS Fife Medical Director, Dr Christopher McKenna, said:

“A&E is always there for those who need it and in a life-threatening emergency, you should always go to A&E or dial 999.

“If you need urgent medical attention and it’s not life-threatening, calling NHS 24 on 111 in the first instance means you will be able to be assessed over the telephone and referred to the right healthcare professional.

“This can avoid unnecessary trips to hospital and allow you to access care as close to home as possible.”

Anyone with symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 should not attend A&E and must adhere to public health advice. They should contact the NHS to arrange to be tested - either online at [NHSInform.scot](https://www.nhs.uk/inform-scot), or by calling 0800 028 2816.

For further information on where to access the right medical care, visit [NHSinform.scot/right-care](https://www.nhs.uk/inform-scot/right-care).

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